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NURSING IN MISSION STATIONS



[This department has a two-fold purpose,—to keep nurses in this country in touch with the work of missionary nurses, and to put missionary nurses in touch with each other, for an interchange of ideas, questions, and suggestions. All nurses engaged in mission work, of every creed and country, are invited to contribute to its columns.]

AN OPEN LETTER TO NURSES INTERESTED IN MISSION WORK

I HAVE taken the AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING for the past year and have seen many accounts of nursing work done in hospitals. I would like to give a few particulars of hospital work in United Provinces, *India*; and would like to ask if any of those nurses who are looking out for posts as superintendents of hospitals would come to a Mission Hospital like the one I have been working in? In Victoria Hospital, Benares, we have 16 nurses and compounders and there are 70 beds in the hospital. The Indian girls come to us at 18, they are nominally Christians and come to us from mission schools and orphanages. Sometimes 200 girls are under the care of one English nurse, Miss Sahiba, so they cannot get much individual attention. The Indian girls are quick to learn, very affectionate, cheery, and easily do what they have seen done once, have excellent memories, and learn by heart quite easily. They need, however, great care and watching, and are always in dangers from one side or another. They have not been used to the freedom they are obliged to have in their nursing work, so like school girls need watching, stimulating, reproofing, encouraging, and more than all the Christ spirit to teach them to work well.

Our hospital is *purdah nashin*, *i.e.*, hidden from the eye of strangers, and no man is allowed inside except at visiting time, which is once daily, when all our patients' beds are surrounded by curtains drawn completely round their beds. Women in India are not so strong as we are, and many a fight has to be gone through for their lives, but they have great faith in our praying for their sick ones and some we know of, have made marvellous recoveries. Our lectures to nurses and all teaching must be given in Hindustani, or Hindi and Urdu together, and a year is generally allowed or longer if needed, for the missionary nurse to learn the language. All nursing classes, midwifery, and hygiene, and all but dispensing is taught by the nursing superintendent, of whom there is only one in each hospital.

Examinations are held twice a year, when a chosen nurse superintendent from some other hospital comes to our hospitals to examine our nurses.

When patients are admitted, one friend, or *rishtidar*, is allowed to stay with them, and if they have a private room, another is allowed to cook their food on the small verandah at the back.

Zenānā means a woman or a family, a girl, up to 6 years old, has the freedom of the house and a lovely time and is spoiled by all her relatives. After her sixth birthday she is hidden with the other purdah nashin ladies until her marriage, when she pays a short formal visit to her husband's family, coming back to her own home for a few years to get grown up, and often at about 10 she goes to join her husband's family and live there.

We are greatly in need of nurses and want three to join us in the above mission for three hospitals. I am going out in October, if any nurses, fully graduated and having their midwifery and some knowledge of dispensing would like to go there with me, I can write to them full particulars.

The Zenana Bible Medical Mission pays their voyage out and returning, after 5 years, also allows them money sufficient for an outfit, and a salary quite sufficient to cover expenses there. Of course a missionary nurse is essential.

Zenana Bible Medical Mission Offices,
Kings Chambers, Portugal St.,
Kingsway, London.

I RESPECT the dandelion most because it is the universal flower, and its cheerful face greets worn and weary men in places where none other attempts to grow. It follows the snow line on the Andes; I have found no other flower in Tierra del Fuego; it abounds in the South Pacific Islands and brightens the gloomy desert of Gobi on the "Roof of the World." You can find it in every gorge of the Himalayas; it grows upon the Mount of Olives, and the Peak of Ararat, and reaches its largest size under the Midnight Sun in Spitzbergen and at the summit of the North Cape. It smiles upon the just and upon the unjust, sets us all a good example by doing its duty cheerfully and faithfully, regardless of climate and conditions.

WILLIAM E. CURTIS.